# *The Islamic Ruling on Tawassul*

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All praise is due to Allaah alone; may He send salutations and exalt the mention of the seal of all Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his companions.

The spread of many innovations, myths, and polytheistic practices has increased in our time due to people's ignorance resulting from their abandonment of the commandments of Allaah. One of these practices which are widely spread is glorifying the so called *Wali* (righteous person) and supplicating to them instead of supplicating to Allaah. Many people hold the belief that they can cause harm or benefit to people, so they glorify them and circumambulate their graves.

Those people claim to supplicate to the *Wali* as a means for Allaah to fulfil their needs and relieve their suffering during adversities, but if these ignorant people refer to the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah* and comprehended what is in them regarding supplication, they would have understood the real meaning of the permissible legislated *Tawassul* (seeking nearness to Allaah).

The permissible *Tawassul* is that which is done by being obedient to Allaah and His messenger (ﷺ),

by performing righteous deeds and refraining from prohibitions, by supplicating Allaah by virtue of His beautiful Names and lofty Qualities. These are the means to attain the pleasure and mercy of Allaah. *Tawassul* by rushing to the graves and circumambulating them, offering sacrifices to their dwellers in order to get their needs fulfilled and adversities released - none of this is legislated nor is it permissible, in fact it is practicing one of the major forms of disbelief and associating with Allaah [shirk].

Any person who exaggerates in dealing with a living righteous person and attributes any form of worship to him, like sacrificing using the name of that righteous person instead of using the name of Allaah upon slaughtering, prostrating for that righteous person, supplicating to him instead of Allaah, like saying ‘O so and so! Please forgive me, have mercy upon me, support me, sustain me, or rescue me,’ has committed a major act of disbelief by associating the person with Allah and attributing the qualities of Allah to Allah's creation. Moreover, Allaah sent the messengers and sent down His divine Books so that He alone may be worshipped without a partner.

Those who used to worship idols like *Laat, 'Uzzaa,* and others during the early pre-Islamic period never believed that these idols created anything or that theycaused rain to dr op, but rather they used to say, 'We worship them to bring us close to Allaah' and also, 'These (idols) are intercessors between us and Allaah'.

Allaah sent His messengers to prevent people from invoking other than Him in the forms of worship, supplication, and seeking support. Allaah says what means, ***"Say (O Muhammad ): 'Call upon those — besides Him whom you pretend [to be gods like angels, 'Eesaa (Jesus), 'Uzair (Ezra) and others]. They have neither the power to remove the adversity from you nor even to shift it from you to another person."*** *(Al-Israa':56)* He also said, ***"Say (O Muhammad to polytheists, pagans): 'Call upon those whom you assert (to be associate gods) besides Allaah, they possess not even an atom's (or a small ant's) weight either in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor there is for Him any supporter from among them. Intercession with Him profits not except for him whom He permits.' "*** *(Saba':22-23)* Allaah informed that those who are invoked and supplicated beside Him do not weigh as much as an atom or an ant, nor does He

need the help of any of His creation to support Him.

The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited the use of graveyards as places of worship, and he said in his death sickness warning from the practice of the Jews and the Christians, ***"May Allaah curse the Jews and the Christians, they used the graves of their prophets as places of worship."*** He (ﷺ) said that as a preventive measure against falling into *Shirk* (associating others with Allaah), because one of the main reasons behind people falling into idol worship was glorifying the graves of righteous people by worshipping them or supplicating them.

Many people use as an excuse and an evidence to practice *Tawassul* in its wrong prohibited form, the story of *'Umar* (رضي الله عنه) when he implored for rain through *Al-'Abbaas* (رضي الله عنه). *'Umar* (رضي الله عنه) did not implore for rain by virtue of *Al-'Abbaas,* rather he requested him to supplicate to Allaah begging Him to send rain. Additionally, *Al-'Abbaas* (رضي الله عنه) with him was not dead. It is permissible to use someone as a means to approach Allaah with supplication, provided he is a righteous person. Likewise, when someone requests a righteous person to supplicate for him, he (the person with the need) supplicates to Allaah for the acceptance of the supplication of the righteous man.

The dead who are sought for help and fulfillment of needs do not have power to help themselves, let alone the ability to help others. How can one benefit people when he cannot benefit himself? No sensible person would approve the claim that a dead person, who cannot move, without any functioning senses function, can benefit himself or others. The Prophet (ﷺ) negated the claim that the dead can perform any deed after his death when he (ﷺ) said, ***"When the son of Adam dies, he loses benefit from his deeds except from three. A charity that is continuous in benefit, beneficial knowledge and a righteous son that supplicates for him."***

This *Hadeeth* proves that a dead person is the one who is in need for people to supplicate to Allaah for his forgiveness, and not the other way around. If the *Hadeeth* stated that he loses the benefit of his deeds, how can anyone think that the dead is alive in his grave in a manner which enables him to communicate with others and support them? How can one who is incapable provide others what he cannot provide for himself? The dead person cannot hear no matter how long one stays by his grave and supplicates to him. Allaah says what means, ***"He merges the night into the day (i.e. the decrease in the***

***hours of the night is added to the hours of the day), and He merges the day into the night (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the day is added to the hours of the night). And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each runs its course for a term appointed. Such is Allaah, your Lord; His is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even a Qitmeer (the thin membrane over the date stone). If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call; and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them."*** *(Faatir: 13-14)* Allaah negated their ability to hear the supplication, and it is known that the one who does not posses any power is helpless and cannot grant anything. Similarly, it is also known that the one who cannot hear will never respond because he is unaware of what people are asking of him. The verse also clarified that the ones from whom people seek help other than Allaah will never fulfill any request.

The worship of any one besides Allaah is false and rejected. Allaah says what means, ***"And invoke not besides Allaah any such that will neither profit you nor harm you, but if (in case) you did so, you shall certainly be one of the Dhaaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers). And if Allaah touches you with harm, there is none who can remove it but***

***He; and if He intends any good for you, there is none who can repel His Favour which He causes to reach whomsoever of His slaves He wills."*** *(Yoonus:106-107)* This verse clarifies that any one that is called upon for help other than Allaah has no power to harm or benefit. Therefore, what it is the benefit of supplicating to them or worshipping them? This verse proves that those who say, "We went to the grave of so and so, or supplicated to so and so, and we got what we requested," is a pure liar. In the event that something does happen and a need is fulfilled for these people, then it is for one of two reasons:

1. It is something which is within the power of the creation of Allaah, and Satan or a Jinni did that. This is possible because they are always present around the graves, since the dead in the grave is like an idol being worshipped besides Allaah. Therefore, Satan attends to decorate, whisper, and influence people. Those who seek approach to Allaah through some *Wali* are a type of idolater, so Satan adds to their misguidance as he did with idolaters before. He appears to them in the shape of the dead person and talks to the people seeking assistance. Some of what he talks to them

about could be true, but most of what Satan would say to them is false; some of their needs may actually get fulfilled, or some of what they hate or fear may be stopped, all within that which creatures are usually capable accomplishing. As a result, these naïve people would think that it was the *Wali* who came out from his grave and fulfilled it for them, but the fact of the matter is that it was Satan who did it in order to misguide them, just as Satan would enter into the idol and speak to its worshippers to further misguide them.

2. It is something which only Allaah can do, like grant life and death, health, provisions or other things which can only be done by Allaah. Such is something which Allaah has pre-ordained and decreed, and it did not happen as a result of the supplicating to the person in the grave, as they claim.

A sensible person should not believe this nonsense and has his heart attached to Allaah, and seeks His help when in need; one should not turn to other weak humans, but turn to Allaah instead, in order for his needs to be fulfilled.

### *Claimed miracles*

Many people misunderstood and became confused regarding the reality of miracles and abnormal behavior; they did not know how to perceive them, nor could they distinguish between the two. Real miracles are those which come from Allaah in order to support His messengers and the message sent from Him to mankind, or it could be as a form honoring some of the real righteous slaves. People could not distinguish between this type and the abnormal behavior of some liars who deceive people and trick them so that they can eat up their money.

Some ignorant people thought that miracles are things which a person can develop in his personality, and it is within human power and capability; they thought that people perform these miracles willingly and by their own choice, and by this wrong belief they thought that a *Wali* has the power to perform any miracle at any time he desires.

To answer this we say, some people picture the things which take place by these fakers as miracles reflecting the piety of the dead. This is a lie, and all of these incidents are either with the help of Satan, or fabricated in a very smart way in order to deceive

people's minds and to cast over these dead ones fake glory and honor so that people would magnify them. No sensible person whose nature is still uncorrupted would believe that a dead person can perform any deed after his soul departed him and he has no power to move any more; worms have eaten up his body and his bones have become worn out. Who would believe these claims except for an ignorant or a naïve person? We say this because some of these actions claimed to be performed by the dead cannot be performed by a live person, let alone the dead; should we discard our brains which Allaah granted us, and simply believe this nonsense? Sound minds and uncorrupted human nature refuse to accept this nonsense because they openly oppose all the Islamic and natural laws which Allaah has set. Allaah says what means, ***"It is not (possible) for any human being to whom Allaah has given the Book and Al-Hukm (the knowledge and understanding of the laws of religion) and Prophethood to say to the people: 'Be my worshippers rather than Allaah's.' On the contrary (he would say): 'Be you Rabbaaniyyoon (learned men of religion who practice what they know and also preach others), because you are teaching the Book, and you are studying it. Nor would he order you to take angels and Prophets for lords (gods). Would he order you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allaah's Will?"*** *(Aali 'Imraan:79-80)*

## *The polytheists in the past and today*

Many people from those who visit the graves seeking help say, “The polytheists in the past used to worship idols, but we have no idols. Instead we have some graves for some righteous pious people whom we do not worship, but we approach Allaah to fulfill our needs in virtue of their honor, and worshipping is different than supplicating.”

We answer these people saying, seeking help or blessing from the dead, in essence, is supplicating to them seeking their help, just as the people in the pre-Islamic period used to supplicate to their idols. There is no difference between the idols the early people used to worship and the graves that people worship today. They are two different names for the same thing; both groups of people worship a *Taaghoot,* which is anything worshipped besides Allaah, whether live or dead, human, animal or object. The disbelievers were asked before about the reason they invoke upon their idols. They said as Allaah says what means, ***“We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allaah.”*** *(Az-Zumar:3)* They took their idols as mediators between them and Allaah to fulfill their needs. Thus it becomes evident

that there is no difference between them and those who claim affiliation with Islaam, yet invoke upon the dead in their graves; both the categories committed *Shirk*.

### ***Shirk in one's love***

Devoting all ones love and directing his heart and feelings and glorification towards any creature is not permissible, for this is not supposed to be for other than Allaah. Those who claim that they only love the dead righteous people, yet in reality they honor them and praise them to an extent which exceeds the Islamic limits, are in fact worshipping them. This is because they direct all their love to them, slaughter sacrifices for them, circumambulate their graves like people circumambulate the *Ka'bah*, and supplicate to them seeking their help and support T his should not be done to the dead (or live people either).

Another proof of how the people exaggerate their glory is that they swear by their names to indicate that they are telling the truth, where as if they swear by Allaah, they could be lying or joking; some of them might hear a person cursing Allaah and wouldn't become angry, but if he hears anyone

cursing his *Shaykh* he becomes extremely angry. Isn't this an extreme exaggeration that they glorify them more than they do Allaah? They love them more than they do Allaah, Allaah says what means, ***"And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allaah as rivals (to Allaah). They love them as they love Allaah. But those who believe love Allaah more."*** *(Al-Baqarah:165)*

### ***Allaah is Near to His slaves***

Allaah says what means***, "And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright."*** *(Al-Baqarah:186)* So there is no mediation between Allaah and His slaves, and there is nothing to prevent the slave from directly invoking upon Allaah and seeking His help without the need for the people of the grave and seeking approach to Allaah through them; there is no need to have the people of the grave as intercessors and ask of them what they will never be able to fulfill and have no power to do.

A Muslim should rush towards his Lord directly and seek approach to Allaah through the permitted means like virtuous deeds, supplicating to Allaah using His beautiful Names and lofty Qualities, firmly believing that Allaah is the only One Who can grant honor and might, or humiliate, The One Who causes of life and death, The Sustainer, The One Who can harm or benefit. The Prophet (ﷺ)said when he was addressing *Ibn 'Abbaas* (رضي الله عنه), ***"Know that if all the people unite to benefit you with something, they will be unable to benefit you except with that which Allah has preordained for you, and if all of them intend to do harm to you they will not be able to afflict you with anything except that which Allah has predestined against you."*** *(Ahmad & Tirmidhi).* If this was said regarding live people, it is more worthy to be applied to the dead.

Therefore, anyone who is practicing any of these innovated acts of *Shirk* like circumambulating the graves, glorifying their people, asking them to fulfill certain needs and relieve them from calamities should repent to Allaah from this corrupt deed which is associating them with Allaah [shirk] and setting them as partners. This entitles those who do so to an eternal life in Hellfire. Allaah says what means, ***"Verily, whosoever sets up partners (in worship) with***

***Allaah, then Allaah has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Dhaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) there are no helpers.”*** *(Al-Maa’idah:72)*

A person should be sincere in performing his acts of worship to Allaah alone without partners in any aspect of life; he should worship Allaah the way Allaah legislated if he was truthful in his claim of Islaam, and he should not turn to any creature in invocation or other things because Allaah is the only One who can fulfill these needs. He should also adhere to the Qur’aan and the Sunnah and should not mix with people of innovations in the matter of the religion, nor should he mix with those who do practices of *Shirk* so as not to be influenced by them, and consequently lose this life and the Hereafter.